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BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) AND IT'S ASSOCIATION WITH DIET AND EXERCISE AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS; ARE FUTURE DOCTORS AT RISK OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

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Background: Underweight and obesity are major risk factors for Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in adulthood which lead to 63% of mortality in worldwide. This study gives insight to medical students to keep BMI in normal range

Aim/s: This study was conducted to determine the distribution of Body Mass Index (BMI) among medical students of Faculty of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences in Rajarata University and association with exercise and dietary habits.

Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted among medical student of Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences of Rajarata University from 01.06.2016 to 15.06.2016. Their height and weight were recorded using standard methods and BMI was calculated. BMI was categorized as <18.5=Underweight, 18.5–22.9=Normal, 23-24.9=Overweight, 25-29.9=Pre-Obese and >30=Obese. Self-administered questioner was distributed among medical students regarding their types of foods, frequencies, exercise etc.

Results: There were 395 of students of this study sample. Mean age is 23.43 years, SD 1.73. There were 142(39.9%) of males and 253(64%) of females. Mean BMI is 22.44, SD 3.59. 23(5%) males and 57(14%) of females were in underweight category while 65(16%) males and 69(17%) females were in overweight or obese category. The mean BMI of males was 20.3, (SD= 6.8) and among 20.2 (SD=5) females. 277 students could remember their past BMI which was measured before minimal period of 3 months. The mean past BMI was 20.78 and the present mean BMI is 21.31. The increment of BMI was significant. (Pared t = 5.025, p = 0.001). Only 50 (12%) students allocated time for exercise. The BMI is significantly higher among those who are engaged in exercise compared to non-exercising group. (Chi square= 0.014, p=0.11). The average number of student who consume high fatty diet for breakfast, tea break and dinner was 42(10.6%), 43(10.6%) and 43(10.6%) respectively. There is no significant association with BMI and academic performance of students.

Conclusion: Students with higher BMI were more careful on their BMI. A considerable number of students consume unhealthy foods. Even though medical students have knowledge on importance and risk behaviors for NCDs our data shows inadequate care and practices towards healthy life. New strategies must be implemented to improve health status among medical students

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